

CAPstone!

10

Habits of Highly Effective Cadet Leaders

A Leadership Book
For Cadets, By Cadets



"Be GREAT, you ARE!"
CMSgt Bob Vasquez, USAF, Retired

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Why?

Ugh, another leadership book, you may be groaning to yourself. Don't we have enough already?

Ask yourself this. Is there a leadership book designed specifically for Civil Air Patrol Cadets? Now, most of you are probably thinking, um, yeah. Learn to Lead. So then why CAPstone? CAPstone is a leadership book written *by* CAP Cadets *for* CAP Cadets. It is a collection of the most important lessons that CAP cadets across the nation have been taught throughout their cadet career. Whether you are a Cadet Airman or Cadet Colonel, there is something in this book for you.

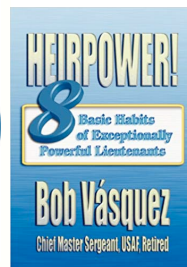
Imagine being able to go back and fix every mistake you've ever made. Wouldn't it be great? Actually no, it sounds like a nightmare. In any case, reading these leadership lessons will prevent you from making those mistakes you wish you could go back and fix. As an old proverb says "Smart people learn from their mistakes, wise people learn from others' mistakes."

Now, while you won't be reading solely about other cadets' mistakes, you will be reading about the lessons they have learned. By reading other cadets' important, and oftentimes amusing stories, you can learn invaluable lessons that can serve you for the rest of your life. It might seem a bit bold of us to claim this, but it's true!

By reading this book, you're adding to your leadership toolbox. Each story is a hammer, screwdriver, or a duplex rabbit plane. And no, we did not make that last one up! You'll be thanking yourself later for having read this book when you have all the tools you need to face any leadership challenge life can throw at you. After all, taking the time to build your character is always one of the best investments you can make.

So, make it!

Cadet Authorship Program Team.



Founders Notes (CAPstone!)

Greetings Cadets!

My name is Cadet Dava Flowers, and I am the founder (as well as one of the many wonderful creators and editors) of CAPstone.

First, I want to explain why we use the word "Heirpower". The word Heirpower exemplifies some of the core concepts in leadership. The definition of the prefix, "heir" is "a person inheriting and continuing the legacy of a predecessor." A close friend of mine likes to define their leadership philosophy as "being replaceable." This means that the ultimate goal of a leader is to allow your followers to learn from your mistakes and become a *better leader than you were*. If this is the case, then the purpose of a leader is to have as many "heirs" (followers and predecessors) as possible.

Secondly, to discuss the "power" portion of heirpower - if you've read Chief Vasquez's book, you would have heard him discuss what it means to be "powerful". The chief defines power as "the ability you need to perform effectively."

In short, Heirpower means to inspire those below you to perform or act effectively; to ultimately replace you.

Our purpose in writing testimony is not to obsess over our own personal successes or failures, but instead, to share them with those who have not encountered the situations that we have. Our goal is to become indirect mentors to a young cadet audience. That's the purpose of our book - Heirpower.

So enjoy these lessons, and apply them to your life as much as possible. If you take anything from these stories, keep these two things in mind:

"Continue problem solving!"

and

"Mentors have Mentors!"

Cadet Dava Flowers

CAPStone!

Founders Notes (CMSgt Bob Vasquez)

I'm speaking at CAP's annual Leadership Training event on 5 July 2019, sharing my thoughts about what makes a Leader of Character, as well as the tenets of my book, HEIRPOWER!, when, all of a sudden my Cadet Flowers suggests that the Cadets should write a book for next year's event and that I should guide them! WHAT?! How can you say no in public? I have a hard-enough time saying no in private! So, I said, what I usually say to any challenge, even (sometimes, especially) if I don't know what it actually is: YES, OF COURSE!

I'm glad I did.

What you're about to read are thoughts, experiences, and ideas, that come directly from CAP Cadets. I've added my perspective as additional guidance. As I do in all of my books, I'll suggest my thoughts and methods, but I try not to be prescriptive, I prefer to be more descriptive. The perspective of these young leaders is, after all, different than those of this old Chief. We sometimes, however, need to go back to the future to go forward. That's how I see my role in this project. I'm so proud of the CAP Cadets who did the work to produce this book, as I am of all the CAP Cadets I've ever met! They're the real Leaders of Character who will lead us in the right direction in the future!

Be GREAT! You ARE!

HEIRPOWER!

Habit One: Hang on Tight! Find an (Enlisted) Mentor

I've made a gargantuan mistake!

by C/Johnpaul Stolle, CAP



A Leadership Book- For Cadets, By Cadets

Why:

As aspiring leaders, we need to find someone to be our mentor. Someone that can teach us all the lessons they learned from their mistakes so that we can accomplish our vision with minimal mistakes on our way.

Lesson:

I needed to be on a call with the rest of my medical department, but because of the many tasks that I had to keep in mind, I nearly missed my own conference call with the medical team. Thinking I had made a “gargantuan mistake,” I quickly tried to pick up the pieces from having missed the call. My mentor put the minor mishap into perspective, taught me to laugh at my mistake, and remember the lesson I learned from it.

I was chosen to be the Medical Officer In Charge (OIC) for the group III Airman Leadership School in Texas. In this position, I was tasked with taking responsibility for all medically related tasks for the activity, along with a team of three other cadets and a senior member. I decided that the best way our team would be able to bond is if we had a conference call, as this would be a great platform to get to know each other. As a team, we all decided that we would be on the call at 2000.

On the day of this particular conference call, life decided it would be a good idea to give me everything all at once. The conference call was the last thing on my mind.

It's 1900 (7 pm) and I'm on a call with a colleague of mine discussing a few items. I finally get off the call at about 2030 (8:30 pm), and get on my phone to see a pile of text messages from my team:

“I'm on the call, anyone else?” “What time is the call at?”
“Where's Stolle?”.

My heart sinks.

I frantically text the group chat that all the team members are on saying, “I've made a gargantuan mistake”. By 9 pm I've managed to scrape together another conference call with each of my team members on the call. I was pretty surprised that the call went pretty well considering how disoriented I was.

Let me give you a bit of an insight into my background. I'm a blazing perfectionist, I don't like making mistakes, they suck and make me frustrated. It's been one of my greatest weaknesses, and trust me it is a weakness. I'm livid with myself.

“You just missed your own conference call, you dunce!”.

During this whole fiasco my mentor, the Deputy Commander of Support, is watching (as she is also part of the group chat). I call her the next day expecting the same response to my mistake as I had. Instead, she catches me off guard. She said that she read “I've made a gargantuan mistake” and giggled.

I hear this and have to laugh a bit myself at my choice of words. She further explains that she has nearly done the same thing herself multiple times in the past and that you have to learn to take your mistakes with a sense of humor. Ever since that call, my whole perspective on my mistakes has changed. I no longer look at my mistakes as a failure of my character, but rather my human nature showing itself and as an opportunity to learn.

This is exactly what awesome mentors can do, they can change your outlook entirely. Make sure to find yourself a good one, because they can be some of the most amazing people you know.

At this point, you may be asking “Well how do I find a mentor like that?”. It's simple, find the person in your life that knows the most about X, whether that's math, an instrument, professionalism,

empathy, or anything else you could possibly want to learn about and learn everything from that person.

Learn not only from their successes but more importantly, from their gargantuan mistakes.

Chief V's View

As Cadet Stolle suggests, find an expert in the topic area you're interested in honing. Often, we think a mentor knows everything about everything. WRONG! There are people out there, however, who do know a lot about one or two things. Case in point, DO NOT ask me to mentor you in Math, Chemistry, Physics, or any of the other "hard" subjects. I guarantee we'll both fail. Actually, I've been mentoring folks for a very long time. I would never accept your offer to mentor you in those subjects.

If you'd like mentoring in character and leadership, I'm your man! Now, although those two subjects are known as "soft" skills, they're the hardest. With all due respect, you can teach someone how to add and subtract, but you really can't teach them how to make good decisions and how to be a good person. That's HARD!

Let me share with you a thought from my *PowerPact Leadership Lessons!* regarding making mistakes, specifically, the fear of failure...

You've heard the expression, "fear of failure." It's been said that people have a fear of failure. I don't know about you, but I don't believe it. I think we, as a culture, give it too much credence. I'm convinced that we don't fear failing. You've also heard that we learn more from our failures than from our successes. I don't believe that either. Like so many platitudes, someone said those things, they became popular, and, eventually, they were considered wisdom.

Harumph!

I've been observing life for almost seven decades. What I've learned, and not from failing, is that people don't fear failing as much as they fear being ridiculed or embarrassed by their failures.

My Princess Number Four, Pequeña, who is four-years-wise, told her gym teacher, the other day, that she couldn't run because she'd throw up. I don't know about you, but if a little person tells me they'll throw up, I'll do what I can to avoid that from happening. The teacher was smart enough to not force Pequeña to run. She did, however, report it to Pequeña's mother, my daughter, Elyse. Elyse, being the wise mom that she is, asked Pequeña if she'd told her teacher what the teacher said she had. Pequeña acknowledged that she, indeed, did do so. Upon further investigation (Pequeña's sister, Button, told her mom), Elyse found out that Pequeña had said that, not because she was going to throw up, but because she was fearful that she would fall and that her classmates would laugh at her. They'd ridicule and embarrass her. THAT'S what she feared! I've seen Pequeña take a hard fall, get up, and keep running...when I, alone, was with her. You see, she trusts that I won't ridicule or embarrass her. She's willing to fail, fall, when I'm around because

she knows that I'll support her no matter what.

As Deb, my bride, and I were discussing this recent incident, which I laughed at, by the way, because I can...I'm an American and I'm her grandpa...Deb agreed and reminded me of a time she took a spill at the Base Commissary. There were two slabs of sidewalk that were not flush, creating a hazard, which she stepped on and tripped. As Deb related the story, she quickly got up, not in the least concerned with whether or not she'd hurt herself, but deeply concerned with whether or not anyone had seen her. Had I been with her, I would have protected her from embarrassment. I have a pretty good battle face. In my culture we call it El Ojo, The Eye, and it will shut down anyone very quickly.

If you aspire to lead, ensure you develop an environment and culture where people are NOT ridiculed or embarrassed when they fail. Encourage your followers to accept and be empathic about those events. Again, I can't believe that failing is the best teacher, but I will admit it's one way to learn.

Until next time, Be GREAT! You ARE!

¡HEIRPOWER!

Bob Vásquez!

Habit Two: Sharpen the Sword! Take Care of Yourself First

Command Chief, My Face is Weird

by C/Hannah Van Cise, CAP



A Leadership Book- For Cadets, By Cadets

Why?

A lot of CAP cadets are hardworking people. They will not rest until the job is done. At an encampment and other activities, there is always more work to be done. This means that they will not rest or properly take care of themselves. They are so busy taking care of their people they don't take care of themselves. It is essential for their health to learn that they must eat, drink water, and rest adequately.

Lesson

“My face is weird. And sticky. And stiff,” I remember saying. Rather than taking the perfect opportunity to jokingly insult me by agreeing that my face was weird, my Command Chief looked very concerned. Looking back on it, the headaches, lightheadedness,

and whole plethora of other problems could have easily been prevented.

This was my first out of state encampment and I wanted to do Texas proud. I was the 2nd Squadron's First Sergeant. I was ready to work hard, harder than I had ever worked before, to make sure that these cadets had the best training they could possibly have. I didn't care about my physical well-being. I just wanted to get the job done! Looking back, this was a big mistake.

During the first few days of encampment, the flight staff had very little time to rest. The time we did have to rest, I wasted. As an introvert, I have always required time alone to recharge my, "social battery." However, at encampment, instead of spending my rest periods alone, I spent it getting to know my flight sergeants better. During one of the rest periods, I did the students' laundry instead of taking a nap, like I should have. People volunteered to do the laundry in my place. Instead, I insisted on doing it. We got about six hours of sleep each night, so naps were essential, especially considering how active we were. I was constantly running around, checking on flights, making sure everything was going smoothly.

My Command Chief asked me, "Are you gonna go take a nap?", when we had a few minutes to spare.

"No," I replied, "I'm not really much of a nap person."

"You're gonna crash by the end of the week," he warned me. I should've heeded his warning.

I was no better at keeping up with my hydration. On the second day, I only drank half a liter of water when I should have been drinking at least three liters.

I was able to keep up this lifestyle for the first three days. I was a little tired, maybe, but nothing unmanageable. However, the third day was when the exhaustion started to hit me.

I told my squadron commander about how I only drank half a liter of water. He wagged his finger at me and said, “Oh, no. We’re gonna change that.” From that point on, he monitored my water intake and sleep like a hawk.

While on the obstacle course, he told me, “If ya don’t finish all your water by the end of the course, I’m gonna do 50 push-ups.” I didn’t finish my water, so we negotiated. I finished my water by the time we reached the mess hall, so he did 25 push-ups. After he embarrassed me in front of my entire squadron by doing push-ups, I drank more water throughout the activity.

We had a three-hour break where I didn’t have anything to do. Of course, I was busying myself with laundry and any other small tasks I could find. My squadron commander, who happened to be equally bad at getting enough sleep, came up to me while I was doing one of those small tasks and said, “I laid down for a bit, now you have to, too. I’ll finish this up, you get some sleep.”

I tried to get in another word, but he continually shushed me. Finally, I was able to ask, “How long do I have?”

“Three hours.”

“Okay cool. I’ll take a 20-minute nap, then finish this up.” I headed back to my barracks and hit my bunk.

When I finally woke up and looked at my watch, an hour and a half had passed. I recalled setting my alarm for twenty minutes. I shrugged this off and went back to my tasks. After the encampment, I found out that my squadron commander had asked a female flight commander to take my alarm so that I would not hear it when it went off.

Unfortunately, it was too late by the time my squadron commander started his wacky shenanigans to keep my sleeping and hydrating. While I was drilling a flight or teaching a class, I was unaffected, but waves of exhaustion would hit me anytime I sat down. I fell asleep on the chairs, floors, and tables. As I mentioned earlier, my face didn’t feel quite right either. I had a headache and felt lightheaded. It was not a good situation.

More importantly than my physical discomfort, was that this affected my overall performance. I was so busy trying to take care of the students, I did not take care of myself. This, in turn, hurt the students. I was not able to keep up my professionalism when unfavorable things happened.

One evening, the encampment cadre was gone, excluding myself, one flight commander, and one flight sergeant. We had to run the encampment. With more rest, I could have accomplished this. However, at that time I ran around like a chicken with my head cut off, trying to get things done. It was embarrassing. The lack of rest had impacted my ability to control my emotions and remain professional.

Overall, I performed well at the encampment. I was the only out of state cadet who was offered scholarships to return to that wing to staff an encampment again. My squadron commander said that I was the best “First Shirt” he’d ever seen at an encampment. My cadets loved me by the end of the encampment. My only regret is that I did not take better care of myself. It would have saved me a lot of physical discomfort and I would have had a better overall experience.

Many of us will work until we drop. We’ll convince ourselves at one in the morning that our room must be cleaned at that moment, or that we must work on that promotion right now, when in reality there is no deadline, or the deadline is in a few weeks. We are so motivated that we forget to care for ourselves. It is important to remember to take care of yourself in times like that, or else you will not be able to fully function the next day. Just like my lack of rest and hydration caused poor emotional control later on at an encampment, staying up late to unnecessarily finish a CAP test may cause grouchiness the next day.

Remember, take care of yourself first!

Chief V's View

In the Air Force and many other cultures, we talk a lot about Resiliency. We have programs to help people develop resiliency. It's critical stuff! Basically, resiliency is about maintaining your self-fitness. It's about balancing your physical, mental, social, and spiritual fitness at a level where you're consistently at your best. It's not necessarily easy, and, surely, easier at certain times than others.

Here's another *PowerPact Leadership Lesson!* that will make my point. It's called "*Where you at?!*"

I love when my granddaughters ask me, "Where you at, Opa?!"

Although they're asking for my geographical location, I, being the philosopher that I am, take the question to the next level when I make the time to think about it.

If you've read previous PowerPact Leadership Lessons! you may remember that I've already suggested to you that you have to take care of you first! Yeah, that's a seemingly selfish philosophy, but as I've said before, you can't give what you don't have. That's some Toltec philosophy there.

Basically, there are four personal domains, that we all have to balance in order to be healthy, fit, effective leaders. You know them but let me remind you. They're physical fitness, mental fitness, relationship fitness, and spiritual fitness. You have to maintain each

of those domains daily in order to be fit to fight the daily battles, not just as a leader, but as a human being. The good news is that you can do it! The IMPORTANT news is that if you don't take care of you, you won't be able to take care of anyone else.

Eric Hoffer, known as the “longshoreman philosopher,” said, “To become different from what we are, we must have some AWARENESS of what we are.”

Every self-improvement process begins with self-assessment. Where you at?! You want to improve any, or all, of those fitness domains? Start by taking a minute or two and think deeply to assess yourself in those four areas. On a scale of one to five, one being “terrible,” three being “okay,” and five being “great,” how would you grade yourself in your physical fitness, your mental fitness, your social/relationship fitness, and your spiritual fitness. It doesn't have to be exact, but a measure of where you are so that you can, later, assess if you've made any progress.

The next step is how are you going to improve. I've been around awhile. One thing I've learned is that if you don't write down your thoughts, you'll lose them. I used to think that was an old-age thing. It's not. There's too much information (my granddaughters call it TMI) to keep it all in your brain. Write down where you're at so that you can compare after you've done what you just said you'd do to improve. It seems that every improvement we make, even the small ones, will propel us to work even harder. We all like the idea of getting better, but if you don't know where you're at to begin with, how will you know you're better?

I did what I just admonished you to do. I'm not at a five in those domains yet, but I know where I'm at and I'm working on getting better. I challenge you to do so, too.

Until next time, Be GREAT! You ARE!

¡HEIRPOWER!

Bob Vásquez!

Habit Three: Get a Haircut! (First Impressions Matter)

From “MORE” to “MRE”

by C/Noah Shepson, CAP.



A Leadership Book- For Cadets, By Cadets

Why?

Take care of how you present yourself. This is not only applicable to Cadet Officers but every CAP Cadet.

Lesson:

Finally, it was the moment I had waited for after three long years of hard work. I was standing in front of the cadets and senior members of the squadron, ready to receive a command. The outgoing Cadet Commander slowly and with great gravitas relinquished the Unit Colors to his Squadron Commander. For one year, the cadet had served his squadron well, and now it was time for me, his Deputy Commander, to take his place. Now, I stood before my Squadron Commander, ready to receive the command, symbolized by the

Unit Colors. It had taken me three years of hard work and learning from failures to get to where I was at that moment, and I'll admit, I was quite jittery inside with anticipation. After it was done, my former Cadet Commander and I turned and faced the rest of the Squadron. It was time for the speeches, as well as the first impressions, that would make lasting impacts on my new command.

A quick break from the story... I had been a part of three Change of Command ceremonies in the past, two of which I played a ceremonial role. I knew all the stereotypes of Cadet Commanders made by cadets, both outgoing and incoming. I wanted my own to be different. Specifically, the speech. It was the speech that usually had the most stereotypes. It was supposed to be an inspiring litany designed to motivate the troops, but in my experience, the cadets complained either about how too much unfamiliar lingo was used, or how it seemed that all the incoming Cadet Commanders were in cahoots with one another to use the same lame jokes. I had wanted my own speech to motivate cadets to improve themselves, to want to be better, and to make the other cadets and staff feel like they are in good, competent hands. I wanted my first impressions to be unlike anything anyone had seen or experienced.

In a way, I got what I wanted: a memorable acceptance speech. And oh, it was memorable, just not in the way that was planned or expected.

In fact, it was the opposite of what I had planned. I had worked for a long while the day before the ceremony drafting and practicing

the speech, trying to emphasize the things that (I hoped) would make a lasting impression. I really wanted it to hit home with the cadets, and maybe even earn some brownie points from the senior members.

Back to the story...

The outgoing CC gave a short spiel that was concise and to the point. However, when it came to my turn, I, who was decently confident in my first impressions thus far, launched into my own oration without taking a moment to gather my thoughts. I had planned for four main points, four expectations, that I had made for the Cadets under my new command. In the end, they would spell a word - "MORE." This would ultimately reflect the mission of my command: improvement.

When I reached my second point, my mind went blank. I couldn't remember it!

The seconds dragged by at an agonizingly slow pace. What was it? It was simple, it was just a short phrase... Despite all my efforts, I couldn't recall what it was. Improvising, I decided to just skip on to the other points of the speech and scrap the conclusion. It wouldn't make sense without the second point! Having to improvise a dramatic and memorable conclusion is not an easy task, especially for one as nervous as I was in this situation. As a result of this stumbling block, my first impression on the cadets was essentially ruined, or at least not as good as it could have been.

You know the phrase, “big things come in small packages”? Well, my small package was the speech, more specifically, my stumble. The effect my first impression made on everyone was the big thing.

What really makes this story hurt every time I think about it is not necessarily the fact that I stumbled over my words. That happens all the time. It was normal and the cadets knew it. It wasn't that I didn't listen to the horror stories. I did. It was the fact that I didn't live up to the standards set before me, especially as a new Cadet Commander.

In my promotion boards up until that point as a Cadet Officer, a recurring theme had been the transition from a cadet NCO to an Officer. One of the major transitions, it had been said, was that I was now inside of a “fishbowl,” which means my life, and everything I do, would be readily available to be looked at by the other cadets.

Everyone saw my failure that night. The respect that was shown towards me - and my selected staff - changed. Those were some of the “big things.”

First impressions are everything. First impressions are judges, with an amount of power arguably greater than that of the Justices of the US Supreme Court. They have the power to make decisions regarding both short-term and long-term relationships. They can make or break people and their livelihoods. They can gain respect, or they can lose it, trash it, compact it, and burn it, never to be seen again.

When an impression is made, it is similar in process to the signet rings of the Kings and Queens of ancient times. They would have their name engraved on a special ring, which they would then use to ‘impress’ onto the hot wax sealing a decree before the wax solidified and cooled, resulting in a permanent mark on the wax. However, new impressions could be made. If the wax was reheated, and a new seal impressed, it (almost) looked like the original seal was never used. However, there were always some telltale signs as to the original seal’s presence.

It is the same with first impressions. Do not lose hope! If you have made impressions that you are disappointed in, all is not lost! You can develop habits of perseverance and hard work. You can take those habits and show them to those who may not look highly upon you because of that one “oops” moment. The signet ring of the ancient monarchs was not permanent.

Wax can be re-melted and reshaped, and so can impressions, although reshaping impressions takes significantly longer. As of this writing, I am leading a squadron through the advice of my newly-selected staff, who now respect me, not because of my poor first impression at the Change of Command, but because of the hard work and effort, I put into making up for it. Thankfully for me, this story had a pretty good ending.

Now, I try harder than ever to earn the respect of those around me, especially those with whom I work. Every time I meet someone new, I think of every conceivable way I may interact with

this person in the future, and of what and who I represent when I shake their hand.

Chief V's View

In his book, *Blink*, Malcolm Gladwell proposes that we make up our minds about a person within a couple of seconds of meeting them. Man, that's quick! As a leader, you'll have to be on your toes if you want to make a positive first impression. You'll be making an impression all the time, by the way. As General George S Patton said, "We're always on parade." As a leader, you'll be under a microscope!

My best advice is to practice the impression you want to make until it's part of your identity. You could start with developing an "elevator speech" that's composed to impress others. Or you could be truly authentic and develop an identity that's not necessarily produced to impress, but to express who you truly are.

John C. Maxwell has said that "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." Your followers know how much you care. It takes only seconds to figure that out. They'll know by how you treat them. If you're interested in being a good leader, you'll have to develop the identity of caring for your followers. Yeah, you may develop a tag line that's cool, but, more important, you'll develop a heart that cares. The words will come on their own. They'll come from your heart more than your mouth.

Okay, I know that doesn't make literal sense, but you know what I mean. I met you through this book. And I hope that when I met you, you immediately sensed that I care about you. I may not have said it, but my spirit expressed it.

You're probably familiar with the term, charisma. Some people have it and some people try to develop it. I'm not going to judge. It's not my place. But instead of striving to develop a charisma that will impress, just work on developing your spirit. The leader's spirit is based on love. Love of the work you do and the people you do it with. When you get to the point where you have that spirit, you won't have to worry about making a good first impression. It will just happen.

Here's my PowerPact Leadership Lesson titled, First Impressions Last!

I walked into the club one Saturday afternoon, Deb's hand in mine, when I came upon my commander, Lieutenant Colonel Smith. He was in civilian clothes. He was with an unfamiliar man who, too, was in civilian clothes. As he noticed me, he and the man came over to say hello. We all greeted each other as he introduced the gentleman with him as Tony. I shook his hand and welcomed Tony, as my boss had introduced him as having just arrived onto the base. We made small talk and departed. Tony seemed nice enough. I didn't invest much time thinking about him the rest of the day, though.

Monday morning, I'm summoned to my boss's office for something or other. As I enter my commander's office, there, at the commander's desk is Tony. He, too, is a lieutenant colonel, I notice. "Hello, Chief. How are you?" Lieutenant Colonel Tony Jones asks as he turns around to face me. Man, oh man, I felt like an idiot. Tony, the guy my boss introduced me to Saturday is my new boss! I called him Tony the entire time we chatted! That's no way to address your boss!

Humility, sometimes, is overrated! Yeah, I said it! Here's why. Although my old and new bosses were trying to be humble, they set me up for failure. Not huge failure, of course, but we always want to make a good first impression, don't we? (Read my book, HEIRPOWER! Eight Basic Habits of Exceptionally Powerful Lieutenants!, for more on that topic.) In his book, titled Blink, which you should read, by the way, Malcolm Gladwell proposes that we make up our mind about people and things in two seconds. Being the overachiever that I am, I do so in one. Gladwell goes on to say that the immediate first impression may or may not be accurate, whatever accurate means, but it's true. What we sometimes do, in attempting to practice humility does not provide people with the information they need to practice respect which is the cousin of humility in terms of traits people, especially leaders of character, are expected to express.

I'd always rather someone provide me more information than I need than not enough. Lieutenant Colonel Smith, PLEASE tell me Tony is actually Lieutenant Colonel Jones, my new boss, so that I can treat him appropriately. Now, that's not to say that I respect

others less, but there's always a modicum of decorum you want to practice with your new boss!

I've gotten some flak from insecure people who admonish me not to introduce myself as "Chief Bob Vásquez." I'm a retired Chief. That's a status. My rank, according to my ID card says I'm a Chief indefinitely. In the military, rank is important. Status not as much. I want to know that a person is a retired colonel, general, NCO, president, what have you, so that I can render the proper respect for the rank AND the person.

I know, I know, everyone wants to be on a first-name basis with everyone because it makes them equal. We're not equal! Okay, I said that TOO! We all, as Americans have equal opportunities to be our best, but some don't take the initiative, which is okay by me, but those who do and excel deserve the respect that goes with those accomplishments.

Until next time, Be GREAT! You ARE!

¡HEIRPOWER!

Bob Vásquez!

Habit Four: Shut Up! Listen and Pay Attention

Can you Hear What you are Missing?

by C/Sophie Thompson, CAP



A Leadership Book- For Cadets, By Cadets

“...I was driving a cadet home from across the state at 10:30 at night, with her sister in my backseat sleeping, listening to her tell me how close to suicide she was, just a few short months prior....”

This lesson of listening is not really a “war story.” I think it can be better described as an ongoing battle with myself in the form of one of my cadets that I am still losing, three years later.

I transferred squadrons once I began high school in another town. There were only four active members. There were two chiefs and two brand new prospective members in attendance. These two

newbies were sisters, both interested in earning their private pilot's license. One would become my ongoing battle.

Cadet So-and-so (we'll call her), one of the girls, and her sister joined the program and later brought four other siblings with them. That family was essential in building the cadet program up in that unit to the twenty-six that it is, just four years later. Cadet So-and-so flourished almost immediately after getting her CAPID. As our roster slowly, but steadily, grew, she took responsibility and naturally assumed leadership roles.

Her uniform was always sharp, she arrived prepared and was remarkably dependable. She was sixteen at the time, but considering her lack of leadership experience, I saw her as the future of the squadron. She suddenly, around Christmas time in her almost second year of membership, dropped off the map. She ditched regular meetings for a few weeks, then came back with a poor attitude, no work ethic, and became a poor example for her flight of young impressionable cadets. I was the make-shift Cadet Commander at the time but had no time to sit her down to talk to her about what on earth happened.

Scratch. Freeze frame. I would like to take a small time-out here.

I *love* leadership. More specifically, I love servant leadership. I love to study people and how to make them happy. I love to make others' lives easier and to help them learn about the world and themselves in the process. One of my favorite parts of CAP is

getting to work with cadets, and now seniors, one on one, to talk about the important things in life. I love sharing perspectives, getting to know a person down to their core, and talking to them about *why* they are the way that they are. This wholeheartedly requires true listening. This is where I failed my Cadet. I did not listen to her, or anything she was trying to tell me, for months because I quickly jumped to one conclusion in my head about her.

Instead of trying to befriend Cadet So-and-so at the beginning of the new year, I got angry. I was so exasperated in her and her newfound condescending attitude that I decided after a few weeks, that she was letting down her cadets. I wrote her off as a bad leader because she was letting some giant personal ailments get in the way of her duty as a flight commander. I failed to listen to her then and before.

See, whenever Cadet So-and-so took me aside to talk to me (almost every meeting), it was about something personal. I was fine with it. I was happy that she trusted me enough to confide in me. Nothing major was going on in her life, just some typical family issues beforehand. I was there for her. When she dropped off the map that December, I should have been that friend that she trusted me as. I should have asked her about her personal problem. She confided in me before, maybe I was the only one she had to talk to. I did not listen before, and I did not take the time to listen to her in that new year.

This next part intertwines with another habit... bias. Once I wrote Cadet So-and-so off as a bad leader, and therefore had no

patience to talk about her problems with her, my bias affected how I treated her. This is very hard for me to write about. This is one failure I do not let myself live down.

The following spring, I was the Wing CAC Chair and was driving my unit's CAC primary and alternate representative back home. It was dark and we had been driving for a couple of hours already. Cadet So-and-so was in my passenger seat and we were finally able to talk about personal things again. She told me everything that had happened the previous winter and the repercussions since. Things quickly became quite clear. I felt awful.

I nodded along with what she was saying but was not listening. All I could think about was my own shortcomings personified through her. I could only think of what would have happened if she went through with her plans. I selfishly blamed myself for being so awful, telling myself I might have been the only one she could talk to. Needless to say, my guilt stopped my apology dead in its tracks.

The following fall, I was seeking the next Cadet Commander, my replacement. The two Chiefs at our unit, Cadet So-and-so and one of her sisters were our only options. Seeing that Cadet So-and-so was older, the squadron staff wanted to see her take the role, so her younger sister could have some more time to grow. So about six months prior to my giving up command, I put them both in roles to give them both the skills that they needed to lead the unit. We were prepared to give the position to whoever grew more in those six months.

Cadet So-and-so did not perform in her position. Her flight was static as individuals and a group. Again, I did not stop to talk to her. Instead, I grew angry. After two months, I pulled her aside to tell her that she was not going to be a Cadet Commander unless something changed quickly. Again, I found that I had not listened to her.

She never once wanted to be the Cadet Commander for the unit.

This is a remarkable lesson that I have learned. My bias against Cadet So-and so from years ago has continued to hinder my friendship with her, her leadership abilities, the cadets involved, and my integrity when I say that I am always available for my peers and subordinates.

Listening to everything a person communicates - more than simply words is absolutely essential to the core of servant leadership!

You will find incredible things when you truly listen to your people.

Chief V's View

When you listen only for the words, you may miss most of the meaning. You probably already know that ninety-plus percent of the communication process is nonverbal. In other words, it's not the words! It's all the other stuff that expresses meaning. All that other

stuff is often referred to as intuition. It's a gut-feeling that you get, especially when someone isn't being totally honest with you. Not necessarily lying to you, but not being "authentic."

My mentor, Dr Stephen Covey, taught me a lot about empathic listening. The foundational tenet of listening empathically is not judging. The key to empathy is understanding, regardless of whether you agree, just understanding the meaning of what's being communicated.

Empathic listening isn't about listening to, it's more about listening through. Listening so deeply for meaning that you can actually understand how a person feels is a critical skill for a good leader to practice. It's not easy because we usually hear to reply, not to understand. When people feel understood, they'll trust you and share even more than you might want, but that's okay. It's always better to know more than you need than not enough.

It's Not the Words!

I'm sitting at my desk at the Family Support Center at Ramstein Air Base Germany when my intercom buzzes. It's Barb, our Administrative Assistant downstairs, who mans our welcome desk.

"Chief, Chief! Come down here immediately!" she tells me, almost whispering. Barb is one of the most resourceful people I've ever known. If she's asking me for help it must be serious. "I'm on my way," I reply, and head to her aid as fast as I can.

As I arrive, Barb gives me a quick summary of what just happened and is actually happening, which is why she needs my help.

A young Staff Sergeant, who is now sitting in the welcome area, had come by looking for a FIG. That's what I called the Find It Guide. The FIG was one of the most sought-after documents in all of the Kaiserslautern Military Community. It was a booklet that had tons of information about the area. It was priceless. And we, the Family Support Center, were tasked with the distribution of those booklets. They were free, by the way.

As Barb tells me, the Staff Sergeant had asked for a FIG, Barb gave her one, but she wouldn't leave. Barb was an intuitively empathic listener, so she knew there was something going on with that Staff Sergeant.

I get to talking with her and, using my empathic listening skills, learn that she was on her way, literally, to commit suicide. Most people who attempt suicide are really looking for help. They don't know how or where to find it, hence, they end their lives as a last resort. Listening deeply to her story, I'm able to convince her to allow us to help her. The Mental Health Clinic was next door, so we took her over and they took care of her. I saw her a few months later. She was doing well.

Listening empathically is about understanding, not judging. It's critical to being a good leader and just a good person. Let me share my PowerPact Leadership Lesson titled, Shut Up!

"Got a minute?" That three-word question is music to my ears. It implies that the person asking the question values my opinion or thoughts enough that she asked ME, not someone else! I've reached the pinnacle of success as a leader or parent or advisor or other titles I might want to bestow upon myself. Obviously, I AM the sage! Now what?

Well, if I expect her to believe that I'm really that sage, I'd better listen to what follows, "Got a minute?" As she starts telling me what she wants to tell me, I've already decided how I need to reply. I've been there. Done that. Come on, come on, finish your dissertation so that I can fix you!

Yeah, the title of this lesson is pretty much in your face! But that's what it takes to listen, REALLY listen, empathically. If you're going to lead, you're going to have to be able to listen, not just hear, but listen with the intent to understand, not to reply. Did you notice my intent in the previous paragraph? Was it to listen or to reply?

I've been there! Done that! NO, I HAVEN'T! I may have had a similar experience, but probably not. What I went through, even though it may have been similar, may have felt totally different. You and I are different, believe it or not, and how I perceive life is probably different, as well.

Practicing the L Word is critical to leading because it's the essence of communicating. You'll never lead if you don't, or won't, listen because real communication won't happen any other way.

Most schools that profess to teach leadership provide lessons on the critical leadership skill of communication, which is good. But how they perceive the communication process and what they teach is telling. How to express yourself. Yeah, you have to be able to give directions and share your vision and such if you're going to lead, but the real measure of how you lead will be in whether or not you listen to your followers. And not just for their words! The key isn't expression, it's impression. And the only way you'll be impressed by how someone feels is through listening for meaning, not just the words.

How many times have you asked someone how they're doing and they reply that they're fine when you can see that they aren't? More than ninety percent of the communication process is nonverbal. It's about hearing with your eyes and your heart. It's intuitive.

“Don't judge me!” has become a popular phrase as of late. That's EXACTLY what empathic listening is about. NO JUDGING! Strictly understanding. Don't fix me! Just let me share how I feel and accept that I do, regardless of how you feel.

Empathic listening creates trust. Trust, as you already know, is critical to your ability to lead. Shut up! Shut down! Just listen!

Until next time, Be GREAT! You ARE!

¡HEIRPOWER!

Bob Vásquez!

Habit Five: Build Trust! Be Trustworthy.

To Fail or Not to Fail?

by C/Noah Shepson.



A Leadership Book- For Cadets, By Cadets

Why?

Trust each other, but do not trust blindly. Asking questions is okay. Just going along with whatever is said may be necessary for some situations, but you can respectfully dissent on things that you disagree with. Build up the necessary trust between you and your peers to be able to make the right decisions. Trust that your peers have reasons for what they decide, and be willing to offer up another point of view instead of just going along with it.

Lesson:

Two crisp knocks sounded at the door. The two cadets leading the promo board in the room snapped to attention after quickly brushing off their dress blues uniforms. The Commander said “enter,” and the door snapped open. The cadet walked into the room confidently, closing the door behind him, squaring all his corners, and saluting the Cadet Commander perfectly. The

commander saluted back slowly and told the room to be at ease. With a solemnity that gave away his intentions to the more experienced persons in the room (mainly me), he told the cadet that it was, unfortunately, the decision of the board to retain him in grade. He would not get his promotion this month. I could see the cadet's face fall about 10,000 leagues. Ouch.

I joined a squadron in Texas as an inexperienced C/TSgt, fresh out of my first Encampment. It was a squadron much larger than my previous one, so I was very surprised when I was put on the Squadron Line Staff as the Flight Sergeant. Throughout the first year in my new squadron, I slowly gained the trust of the more experienced Cadet NCOs, and even a couple of the officers.

As often happens in a squadron, some cadets age out, join the Marines, go off to Service Academies, and hopefully become plumbers (all noble professions). I was maturing as well. I had made it to C/CMSgt, and I could comfortably call this squadron my home. Soon, I was one of only two officers, with only a handful of the NCOs operating in the chain of command. I had built a strong bond of trust with all of them. I was soon placed in the position of Cadet Deputy Commander. As such, I either sat in on or lead most of the promo boards (that's what the squadron called them) with the commander.

Let's get one thing straight right here, right now. I absolutely despise failure. I know what it's like, having experienced it many times myself, and it sucks. It doesn't feel good when you know that you weren't good enough to attain something. However, what's

even worse than failing is to have to tell someone else that you failed them, that they weren't good enough to succeed. That hurts. I simply don't like failing people. It hurts more than most people know because most people don't have to tell someone that they can't advance in the cadet program.

After the cadet in the first paragraph left the room, crestfallen, I voiced my concerns to the Commander. I asked why the cadet failed so badly. Sure, he needed to work on a few things, his articulation mostly, but other than that, I found no real fault. He had merit, and he was incredibly enthusiastic. I really didn't think that the failure was necessary.

Well, to make a rather long conversation short, I got an earful. He gave me all of the reasons why the cadet, who was a Cadet Staff Sergeant, should have known his stuff better. He also chastised me for not trusting his decision. Needless to say, I left the meeting that night thinking really hard about my decision to approach the commander.

Eventually, another cadet did not meet the standards that were set for him. I was also in that promotion board, and after the cadet left, I decided to express my dissent more respectfully this time. "Surely the Commander knew what he was talking about when he failed the cadet?" I thought to myself.

"What specifically went wrong? He seemed enthusiastic enough to learn to fix his mistakes," I said.

“Sure, but there were other things that you don’t know about that I have seen with that cadet. For instance, he told us in the promo board that he thought he was a very humble person. However, among other things, he has a habit of blaming others for his mistakes. We have discussed this on multiple occasions and the cadet has not improved. The promotion board is an examination of the individual, not what the individual thinks of others.”

I now understood. This time, I had not trusted the Commander enough to even think about how the cadet in question interacted outside of the promotion board. He, however, trusted that my intentions were respectful, and that was a good thing. Later, I told him about how I absolutely despised failing people.

“It’s okay to not want to fail people. In fact, all good leaders should want their followers to succeed,” he explained, “But sometimes, it’s necessary for the sake of that cadet’s progression.

Reflection:

On the flip side, think of the cadet who just failed his promotion board. Think about how a cadet who has just been told that they can’t promote has to trust in the decision. Something that they themselves missed was obviously very apparent to the board, and having been told what that something was, they now have to go on a mission of self-improvement before the next promo board.

The point of this story is trust. You as a cadet are going to have to make decisions, whether they be where to move a flight for

inspections at a squadron meeting, or failing someone on a promotion board. Those around you will have to make those same types of decisions. It's a matter of trusting that those who make the decisions know what they are doing.

What this doesn't mean is that you should trust people blindly. If you have a point of view that would be helpful in making a decision, speak up about it! If you know something that others don't, and that would be helpful, don't be silent! Dissent, when applied correctly and respectfully, goes a long way.

Chief V's Perspective

Trust is the bridge between me and we. But that bridge's strength lies in being trustworthy. In the me. Can others trust you? Can you trust you? Do you do your very best in all that you do? There's a core value for that!

Trust begins with honesty. Sometimes it's easier to be honest with others than with ourselves. Now, I'm not advocating being your own worst critic, there's little value in that. But there's huge value in self-assessment. Take time every day to ask yourself, Did I do my best? Was it what I should have done? Was my purpose an honorable one? Can I improve on my actions? Chances are the answers to those questions aren't as easy as yes and no. Maybe use a scale of one to five where one is "not even close" and five is "I nailed it!" And if your answers are not at the five level, figure out how you can improve and do so tomorrow.

John C Maxwell says that “people don’t care how much you know until the know how much you care.” They know how much you care. And the more you care, and show it, the more they’ll trust you. You’ll then be trustworthy.

Notice I mention show you care. I’ve known a lot of “leaders” who have professed they cared but didn’t show it. If you don’t show it, you either don’t care or you don’t care enough. And, again, when you show people you care, they will trust you. It’s a natural process.

Here’s my *PowerPact Leadership Lesson* on the importance trust plays in our lives. It’s titled “Who Needs to Know?”

I walk into my home and see my lovely bride, Deb, smiling. “Hey, Baby,” she says. “Hey, Baby,” I reply, “How are you?” We go on, asking the usual questions about each other’s day, how it went, what we did, etc. Then we get to a critical part of the conversation.

“You know,” Deb says, “I was talking with Lori today.” Lori was married to one of my colleagues. “Oh?” I asked, “what about?” “Well, we were just chatting when she mentioned something about you guys being gone for Thanksgiving.”

I was on active duty when this occurred. I was assigned to the United States Air Forces in Europe Band at the time, stationed in Germany. One of the coolest things we did in that band, and I take at least partial credit for creating the concept, was that we deployed a big show we called Seasons’ Greetings to locations where our troops

were. We had great success with those shows because we brought in artists from the US and did a big production for our troops and their families, similar to a USO show. I'd had this great idea of playing for the troops (no families there) stationed in Bosnia for Thanksgiving Day! I'm sure you're saying, "What a GREAT idea!" Everyone I'd talked with said the same thing, "What a GREAT idea!" With one exception....

"Lori told you we'd be gone for Thanksgiving?" I asked Deb, trying to sound as if...okay, the OC Factor kicked in. "Oh, Crap!" was all I could think of. In my zeal to get the show together and make it a great event for the troops, I'd forgotten, no kidding, I'd just forgotten, to tell the most important person in my life what I was up to and that it would affect her and the girls since I wouldn't be there for Thanksgiving dinner.

Here's the point. Remember that old saying, "information is power?" That's stupid! Information is just information. It won't get up and do anything powerful. It'll just sit there, sometimes in your brain, and do absolutely nothing. Imagine being the smartest person in the world and no one knowing it. What good would that be? SHARED information, APPLIED information is power.

Sometimes people who call themselves leaders think that keeping information from followers is power. That's REALLY stupid! When we empower others with the information we have, it makes us ALL more powerful and it builds trust.

If you're looking to be effective, whether it's at work or at home, ask a critical question often, "Who needs to know?" Don't you make decisions based on the information you have at hand? Well, imagine having all the information you need! Where would THAT come from? If you have people keeping you informed, then you're liable to make better decisions. And the law of reciprocity says that when you inform others, they, in turn, inform you. You get what you give.

If you're wondering what ever happened that Thanksgiving, we did do the tour. In fact, there's another story I'll consider sharing with you about a very cool thing that happened on that tour. But not here. Deb and the girls understood my purpose and they supported me being gone that Thanksgiving. And I'm almost done paying for that BMW I had to buy Deb to make up for it. It's a very nice car, I must say. SHARED information, APPLIED information is power. And it produces trust!

Until next time, Be GREAT! You ARE!

HEIRPOWER!

Bob Vásquez!

Habit Six: Look Up! Attitude is Everything.

Take charge!

by C/Timothy House, CAP.



A Leadership Book- For Cadets, By Cadets

Why?

A bad attitude is like a flat tire... if you don't change it, you'll never go anywhere! We all have the power to transform the attitudes of others. Even the silliest of events can be a source of good.

Lesson:

Picture this with me. I was at a school summer camp, as I had been for a week. This is New York State, so it may not be as hot as many are used to, but it was pretty dang hot for me and my friends. That, combined with the fact that none of us had been getting much sleep for the past few days, had robbed us of our will to do anything.

There we were, gathered on the ball field, waiting to find out what our daily activity was. Instead of the physical sports, we were used to, it was a large-scale version of Rock-Paper-Scissors called Dragon-Knight-Princess. Nobody on my team was very thrilled. It was clear that we had

lost motivation during certain parts of the game. First, we were all told to make a long march through the hot sun to meet the opposing team... while singing what seemed like a playground song.

I was rolling my eyes along with the rest of my team until I was chosen to be the team leader. When I stood up in front of my team, I realized that some of them seemed to have enjoyed the start of the activity. Instead of being down about it, I jumped at the chance at leadership; my drill sergeant voice had been stored up in the attic for far too long.

We set out to march for the centerline. At the top of my lungs, with as much enthusiasm as I could, I screamed: “We’re going to battle, and we’re gonna win!” We went, we won, the team returned to our line.

This time, my inner CAP cadet calling my name, I taught the group to march at attention. And again, we set out. This time, a bunch of us were marching and screaming. By the time the game ended, team morale was high, and we were all marching with gusto, destroying our lungs and sweating our heads off.

Here’s the part where I tell you we won. But we didn’t. The other team outsmarted us, or at least as much as is possible in a game of Rock-Paper-Scissors. And this would be a pretty terrible example of attitude’s importance if winning the game was the point. Because it wasn’t. I saw that my team was down, that we were tired and ready to be done. If we’d played the whole game that way, it would have sucked. But we didn’t. I changed my attitude, and it showed other people that they could, too.

In the end, the entire team enjoyed the activity way more than they would have at the start. None of them would admit it was fun, of course, but I saw the smiles on their faces. Did we win the game? No. But we enjoyed the heck out of that hour.

I'd call that a success, wouldn't you?

Chief V's Perspective

We choose our attitude! We do that daily. Well, actually, moment by moment. But it's always OUR choice. Others can affect it, just as we can influence others, but the choice is always ours alone. The key is where do we get it from? Some might say that it's a discipline. If we WILL ourselves to have a good attitude we will. Not sure that's true. I, for one, don't have that type of willpower.

Some might say it's habitual. If we practice having a good attitude long enough, it will just be part of who we are. Sure. Good luck with that! My sense is that one sure way to develop a good attitude is by considering our purpose. Why do we do what we do? If it's for external things such as money, prestige, promotion, things like that, I'm not sure we'll be able to maintain a good attitude because, by function, as soon as those diminish or we lose them, it'll affect your attitude in a negative way. When we have a solid sense of purpose, an honorable reason for doing what we do, it will affect us deeply and create a positive attitude in us. It will!

Keep in mind that a good, positive attitude isn't always expressed in what we might call being happy. A good attitude is a purpose-driven spirit of doing what's right in a respectful way.

Think about why you do what you do and see if it doesn't affect your attitude. Chances are, you'll develop an attitude of gratitude.

Allow me to share my *PowerPact Leadership Lesson!* titled, "The Need to Succeed."

I hope you'll make time to read a book by Viktor Frankl titled, *Man's Search for Meaning*. It will open your eyes to many things you hadn't thought about before.

In the introduction, Frankl writes that "success must not be pursued, it must ensue." The word, ensue, if you're not familiar with it, means that it is a result of something. When we pursue, we set our sights on that thing and if we're "truly focused" that's what we're engulfed in doing. When something ensues, it's almost a serendipitous conclusion that's based on behaviors and actions that affect others more deeply than the conclusion itself.

I'm going to go out on a limb and state that all of us want to succeed. The important questions are at what and how? I recently saw a poster that read "Great leaders don't set out to be a leader...they set out to make a difference. It's never about the role - always about the goal." I'm not sure who said it, but I think that's what Frankl meant as well. The goal, or success, being making a difference.

Leading requires passion. Leaders are passionate about helping others empower themselves to become who THEY can be, not what the “leader” wants them to be. Another great quote I recently came across says, “The first thing you should know about me is that I am not you. A lot more will make sense after that.” Again, an unknown author.

If your goal or your purpose, your measure of success, is how many people you’ve turned into you, or a semblance of you, that’s not success. Success in leading is when a person becomes who they were meant to be and you, somehow, helped them become so.

My life’s purpose is to help others achieve theirs. Not mine. I know that my purpose may not be everyone’s. It took me decades to figure that out. I encourage you to consider that even if you don’t agree with someone else’s purpose or mission in life, it’s okay. As my Brother, Dave Campanale, taught me, get over it!

Whether you’re leading at work or at home, figure out what your followers dream of becoming, respect them for it, and help them out as best you can. The world needs all of our successes, not just the ones we consider right. As Pope Francis has said, “Who am I to judge?”

Real success is making a difference. That difference is in helping others be themselves.

Until next time, Be GREAT! You ARE!

¡HEIRPOWER!

Bob Vásquez!

Habit Seven: Be Genuine.

DON'T Let the Uniform Wear You!

by C/Alec Stys, CAP.



A Leadership Book- For Cadets, By Cadets

Why?

It is a common pitfall of youth in uniform, whether JROTC, Young Marines, ROTC, or Civil Air Patrol that values and leadership characteristics are only displayed while wearing their uniform. As a cadet officer in the Civil Air Patrol, you need to hold yourself to a higher standard. You should not accidentally earn C/2d Lt (or officership), there has to be an *intent to lead*. I assert that you do not deserve the officer grade that you wear if you are deliberately less moral, or less of a leader out of uniform.

Lesson:

I have met cadet officers who acted rude, unchivalrous, or simply immoral in my experience in Civil Air Patrol. There was a pattern to the types of people who knew how to succeed, knew how to please people, knew how to meet requirements, but also did not believe in the message

that they were preaching. As a cadet who has met their share of Phase IV officers, no one is excluded from this message. The first major example of a leader who did not believe in his message was a mentor of mine for a number of years. I realized as I grew and developed in leadership that the root of problems with officers like him lies in a pretty simple concept.

Wear your uniform, don't let your uniform wear you. Do not have your uniform to speak for you. Cadet officership has nothing to do with the uniform we wear, and everything about our abilities as leaders. How do you expect cadet officers to carry themselves? How do you expect them to speak? How do you expect them to treat others? This dilemma was the root of my mentor's issues. If cadet officership has nothing to do with the uniform we wear, why was it that my mentor acted like a different person when he was out of uniform? In uniform, he was knowledgeable, succinct, deliberate, he commanded authority and respect. His uniform was well prepared; he never seemed to make mistakes.

There was one big issue that struck me as a young member of his staff: when we talked and met as staff out of uniform. His parents were sweet people, volunteers, and patriots. He treated his parents awfully. Not just on bad days, but every time that I had seen him and his parents together. There were other details about his behavior out of uniform that struck me as negative and unexpected, but it was only negative behavior that I saw from him out of uniform. It shocked me.

I soon realized that he might not be changing his behavior, that he cannot be both people, as the leader who enforces titles at meetings

could not be the same person who made distasteful jokes or treats his parents like an inconvenience despite their unwavering pride and support in him. After much more experience in Civil Air Patrol, I found more officers like him. Cadets that knew how to act, and knew expectations that they could meet, but did not believe in their own messages. He changed the way he acted while he was in uniform in order to “act” as a leader.

This was a teenager who knew how to act like a leader- not be a leader. You should truly believe the lessons you are teaching about morals, leadership, and attention to detail. Do not pretend to be someone you are not.

This concept has impacted me since he left our unit. I hold a strong belief that if you need to be wearing a uniform to command authority or respect from the people you lead, you need to reevaluate the way that you act, and whether or not you truly deserve the insignia that you wear. You are more to your cadets than a uniform. They expect you to be just as much of a leader in uniform than you are outside of it. If you are not, your people will be more reluctant to follow your command. Your image and moral example are important as an officer because your cadets are always watching.

We are all human, the majority of us cadet officers are teenagers. *No one expects you to be perfect, but it does make it a lot harder to follow a leader who does not follow through their own message.* Leaders who change personalities are hard leaders to follow. Strive to wear your insignia as a mark of your hard work, not as proof. The uniform is symbolic of a lot of men and women, a lot of airmen. Take pride in this,

strive to live up to their lessons. Wear your uniform, don't let your uniform wear you.

Chief V's Perspective

What Cadet Stys is describing is what all Airmen **MUST** commit themselves to practicing on a daily basis, in and out of uniform. It's called Duty. And it's what separates military service members from the rest of the country's citizens. What we do and how we do it starts with a conscious and conscientious intent to do what's right no matter what. It's closely aligned with the Air Force Core Value of Integrity. And it's not just first, it's **ALWAYS!**

We Old School Warriors often talk about how serving in the military isn't about serving just ourselves and others, it's about serving a higher purpose. That higher purpose is Duty.

The critical question is, "When does it end?" At the end of the duty day? When we don't wear the uniform, especially off the base? When we retire or leave the service? No. Nope. No way! Living up to our Duty as Airmen **NEVER** ends! We're on duty 24/7. We don't say, "Sorry, Boss, but I can't protect the country today, I've got a tee time." We protect the country all the time! And as leaders we lead all the time. We lead, not just by talking the talk, but by walking that talk. Our sense of duty becomes our identity. My ID card may expire, but my Duty never does.

Here's my *PowerPact Leadership Lesson* titled Wingman Duty.

The word "Wingman" became popular about the time I retired from the United States Air Force, around 2002. The idea has been around for much longer, though. I taught the concept decades ago but used the term "accountability partner." Either way, I believe leaders and followers have a duty to take care of each other. We all have blind spots that others can see better than we can. If you're a leader, it's your duty to make your followers aware of their blind spots and help them out. Here's a war story.

Deb and I have the best seats at Clune Arena, where our USAF Academy Cadets play basketball. We're right at the edge of the tunnel where the players come on and off the court. Basketball is my game!

At this particular game, we're sitting in our great seats, watching the men warm up when this happens. Every team at USAFA has at least one commissioned officer who travels with the team and is their academics advisor throughout the season. Academics are incredibly tough at USAFA so it's a good thing to have scholars with the cadets to help them keep up with their studies. Anyway, Deb and I are watching the men warm up when I notice the full-bird colonel (O-6) who travels with the team, wearing his Mess Dress, coming toward us. This happens to be the same night of the Wing Annual Awards Banquet. I assume he's wearing his Mess Dress because he's going to the Awards Banquet. In my mind, I commend him for making the time to come see his team before the Awards Banquet. As he approaches Deb and me, I notice that the button that holds his Mess Dress coat closed is unbuttoned. As he

gets within hearing distance of me, I call him over. “Sir, can you come over?” “What’s up, Chief?” he asks. We’ve known each other for many years. Now, we’re not buds or anything. I know who he is, and he knows who I am. “Sir, your button is unbuttoned,” I tell him. He looks up at me and gives me the dirtiest look! An if-looks-could-kill sort of look. He buttons his button and goes out the tunnel.

I was bumfoozled by his response! I didn’t expect him to make a big deal about me helping him out, but I, surely, didn’t expect him to be ticked off at me. A little, “Thanks, Chief!” would have been appropriate.

As he walks off, a security guard, who the colonel walked past on his way toward where Deb and I are seated, comes over and commends me. “Thanks for doing that, Chief!” It would have been inappropriate to say anything, but I’m thinking, “Why didn’t YOU stop and correct him? You’re a retired Master Sergeant!”

Deb is livid! “Why did you do that?! That was embarrassing!” I’ve just recently realized that when Deb asks me a question, it’s not really a question, it’s a statement. I hadn’t learned that yet, so I go about answering her question.

I take out my wallet and show her my ID card. I ask her, “What does this say my rank is?” She’s now bumfoozled by what I’m doing, but she answers, “Chief Master Sergeant.” I go on, “When does it expire?” “Indefinitely,” Deb replies. “EXACTLY!” I retort. “I’m a Chief! I will ALWAYS be a Chief! My duty, AS a Chief is to take care of people. Officers, enlisted, civilians, families... that’s what a Chief does.

It's my duty to tell that colonel that he's out of regs. I'm his wingman. I didn't appreciate how he took it, but I have to have the courage to do what's right. It's what I teach these cadets. I can't tell them to do what I'm not willing to do. Besides that, if the Chiefs found out I let that go, they'd excommunicate me from the club!" Man, I'm GOOD!

Deb gives me what we call in my culture, El Ojo, the eye. I sit down and don't say a word the rest of the game. We won, by the way.

I count on others, including Deb, to help me be my best. Sometimes I don't know I'm failing. I'm going to assume you're like me. I'd rather someone correct me than let me do something stupid and realize later that it could have been avoided. Take courage and be a good wingman. It's your duty as a leader!

Until next time, Be GREAT! You ARE!

¡HEIRPOWER!

Bob Vásquez!

Habit Eight: Mindset.

Smile! It Looks Good On You!

by C/Varija Mehta



A Leadership Book- For Cadets, By Cadets

Why?

Civil Air Patrol is an organization that is built on a lot of good will. This program allows people from different backgrounds to come together and to be treated equally. In addition to the plethora of opportunities that it provides, it also leaves an individual with so many memorable experiences and life-lasting friendships. This is because the people we surround ourselves with help us keep a positive attitude by encouraging and supporting us. Thus, it evolves to become a habit to be an empathetic wingman.

Lesson:

“Ahhhhhh!” my friend screamed! “Whatever that is, that is NOT rain!”

I was struggling to even open my eyes, worried that I'd be hit with the dust yet again. The weather was unlike anything I had even

seen. We all ran in a tight herd and the rain started pouring even harder than it was before; our flight sergeant led us to the closest building on the way to our barracks. Slowly, more flights followed us and the building started feeling extremely cluttered. As we sat in silence against the wall, there was only one thought running again and again through my head: *“Can this day get any worse?”*

It was as if my friend knew exactly what I was thinking when she said, “It is going to be alright. We are safe, and for now, that’s all that matters.” I knew that she was trying to uplift my spirits, but the same event kept on repeating again and again inside my head.

That morning, as we were on our way to the dining facility for breakfast, our first sergeant told our squadron to stay back. She told both Golf and Hotel flight that the C3 needed to tell us something. I heard the encampment commander shout, “Squadron Four, Parade Rest.”

As we shifted positions, he asked, “Do any of you know what the four Civil Air Patrol Core Values are?”

“They are Integrity First, Volunteer Service, Excellence In All We Do, and Respect, Sir.” said one cadet.

“Exactly, but it seems as though you have all forgotten the Core Value of Respect in its entirety. You should not all have the looks of confusion on your face, I am absolutely sure that you all know exactly what I mean.” the commander said completely aggravated.

“Today I heard that when someone from the cadre, my cadre, was trying to address a concern, she saw some cadets rolling their eyes at her. I can’t believe I have to say this. We are not your babysitters. I am so disappointed in you all and I have made a decision that no one from Squadron Four will be receiving any honors for the rest of encampment.”

I was shocked. No, I was utterly devastated. Everyday, I would watch a flight receive the title ‘Honor Flight of the Day’ and wonder if we would ever get the opportunity. I had a personal goal to win some honor over the span of the week. Especially because it was my flight commander’s birthday on Day Zero. Now there was no goal we could be working towards. I thought to myself, *“What is the point now?”*

We were not allowed to sing jodies on our way to the dining facility. I could sense the disappointment in my fellow wingmen, but I made sure to keep my mouth shut, to avoid getting yelled at, again.

Suddenly, I heard my flight sergeant say, “Golf Flight, get up! We are going back to the barracks. Remember, there are no lights, so be extremely careful.”

I snapped back into reality and got to my feet immediately.

That night after lights out, my roommates and I huddled around my bed. Clutching on to my flashlight, I said, *“I just can’t believe it! This is absolutely not how I envisioned things to be.”*

“I understand. We are all here together, and that’s what matters. Don’t let the negatives impede on your positives. Smile, it looks good on you!” said my wingman.

I thought about what my friend said, and nodded. Slowly, I smiled and accepted the fact that I can change the future, not the past.

The next day, when we woke up for PT, there was a new rush of excitement and motivation. I felt like a new person. As the day went on, I took in all the feedback enthusiastically. My flight and I continued to make mistakes, but we learned from them, and made sure that they wouldn’t happen again. We took tips from the person that had the best bunk and observed the person who did the best drill. It was almost as if the bond between the flight had grown as a result of our scoldings. Whether it was during drill practice or PT competitions, we realized that we were a family and we needed to stick together if we wanted to make it through the week successfully. Resentment and negativity would only impede our growth and success.

On the last day of the encampment, we could all sense that the mood had lightened. The flight sergeants and flight commanders were starting to joke around with us and we shared several hilarious conversations. After returning from an informative day of tours including the Hindenburg Hangar and the Base Fire Station, it was time for the last report-in.

“Encampment,” there was a pause before the encampment commander the resumed, “Thank you. This week has truly been amazing. Your tenacity and positivity was essential in making this week

run smoothly. It wasn't easy but you did it. I hope you all learned a lot and will cherish these memories for the rest of your lives. Now, the moment you have all been waiting for.....”

“Honor Flight for today is” said the deputy commander for cadets, “Golf Flight.” ... “WHAT?!” my adrenaline was off the charts and my heart was beating so hard. I just couldn't believe it. Golf Flight had won! Our guidon and flight commander walked up to the C3 where a white streamer placed on the flag. I was beaming with pride! We were filled with joy knowing that our hard work was recognized and appreciated. In that very moment, there was nothing more I could ask for. But, if only my flight knew what was awaiting us at graduation.

After the relaxing barbecue, bonding time with our roommates, it was our last night in the barracks. As I lay on my bed, there was only one thought going on inside my head, “*Smile, it looks good on you*” as I got ready to conquer the day that awaited me!

Reflection

Throughout my encampment experience, I learned the importance of maintaining a positive attitude and the impact it can have on your surrounding people. To be an important contribution to your team, it is important to not be disheartened by the hardships that come in your way. Your positive mindset will help you overcome your obstacles and stay on track to attain your goal. Most importantly though, to gain success, the ability to adapt is essential. When things don't go the way you planned, try again, and don't stop until you achieve what you truly

desire! I hope that this story can convey the importance of maintaining a positive attitude in fulfilling your goals.

Chief V's Perspective

Smiling is as contagious as our attitude is. People much smarter than I say that it takes 26 muscles to smile as it takes 62 to frown. At my age, I can't afford to expend any more energy that I have to so I choose to smile a lot more than frown. You'll understand one day. Give it sixty years.

Our attitude can have a huge effect on others. Sometimes, we don't even realize it. I'm stationed in Germany. I'm on my way to work, which is about twenty-six miles from my home. I'm driving fairly fast. I'm driving my BMW. About 100 MPH, when a German, driving an Audi, passes me. Just as he passes me, he decides to get into my lane, cutting me off. I'm not a happy camper. As I get to the shop my Administrative Assistant, Barb, welcomes me by asking, "How are you doing, Chief?" I'm still reeling from that Audi driver cutting me off, so I express myself rather animatedly, surely, emotionally. Barb's a great person so she listens to me empathically and almost consoles me. I go upstairs to get some work done.

At the end of the day, I'm on my way out to my car when I see several Airmen along the way. The first one I see tells me he heard about my morning encounter and sympathizes with me. The next one does the same, giving me advice on how to handle it next time. You have to understand that there are 40,000 people assigned at this base and 39,956 of them know me. As I make my way to my car every single person I see

has, evidently, heard about what happened this morning, and everyone sympathizes with me. In fact, they seem to be as ticked off as I was when it happened. Interestingly, I'd forgotten about it by now.

As I said above, our attitude is contagious, and we often don't even realize its effect on others. I have no idea how many people heard about my morning encounter, but I do know that the attitude I developed affected a lot of people. We can choose our attitude. Choose wisely. Here's my *PowerPact Leadership Lesson* titled All In!

My mantra for several years now has been: *ALL IN!* I cue my audiences by asking, "Are you in?"

Answering ANY question with "ALL IN!" is a declaration of commitment. Being ALL IN! means giving 100 percent. When we give 100 percent, that's our best...all we've got. The term we used back in the day was "work ethic." I'm not sure we value having a work ethic anymore, much less a 100 percent commitment. Often, it seems, people want the reward for just showing up, not for doing the work required.

I discovered this idea while reading Pat Riley's book, *The Winner Within*, where he wrote, "There are only two options regarding commitment. You're either in or out. There's no such thing as a life in-between." Actually, there is. It's called mediocrity. Do you strive to be mediocre? Most of us would prefer great, or at least good.

As a leader, you expect your followers to give 100 percent, don't you? The only way to teach someone how to lead is to show them how.

That means YOU have to be ALL IN! if you expect your followers to do so.

I think there's a very close correlation between ALL IN! and excellence. A lifetime ago, CMSgt (Retired) George Moriarty taught me that excellence is not perfection. It's about giving your best to all you do. None of us will ever be perfect, but all of us can give all we've got.

Former President Jimmy Carter wrote a book another lifetime ago titled, *Why Not The Best?* that's based on an interview with Admiral Rickover who asked him if he'd always given his best while a midshipman at the Naval Academy. President Carter answer honestly, that he had not. "Why not", was the admiral's follow-up question. You'll have to read the book to gain President Carter's perspective.

Sometimes, our ALL IN! isn't enough. There are times I've given everything, but it just wasn't enough. But I know it was all I had. Could I have given more? No. At the end of the day, if you've given all you had, that's all anyone can ask for.

Why aren't we always ALL IN!? We all have our reasons. Sometimes, they may even be rationalizations. You know what we produce when we rationalize? Rational. Lies. Dr Stephen Covey taught me that.

I'm not advocating for you to give so much that you kill yourself, but you can give all you have for that moment, hour, day, to ensure that what you produce is the best you can.

I'm convinced that our country, as a culture, needs to revisit the concept of the work ethic. We need to recommit to embracing the right values and exemplifying them to the best of our capabilities on a daily basis. Imagine how great we'd be if everyone gave their best at being our best!

Are you in?!

Until next time, Be GREAT! You ARE!

¡HEIRPOWER!

Bob Vásquez!

Habit Nine: Self Confidence.

The Answer is in Your Attitude.

by C/Noah Shepson



A Leadership Book- For Cadets, By Cadets

Why?

We do everything for a reason. It's our attitude when we go into doing something that has an effect on the outcome, arguably sometimes even more so than the skills required to accomplish it. When we start something with a negative attitude, correlative results are more likely to be the outcome. Likewise, if we dive into a task with a positive attitude, we are more likely to receive a positive result.

Lesson

The paper lay there in front of me, cold and defiant. Next to it lay a similar paper, this one riddled with small ovals. It was a test. A milestone test, to be specific. That meant it was closed-book, and that I could not simply flip to the answers in a handy textbook, which at present was absent from my side. It was the last question. Pencil hovering over each word, I re-read the question for what seemed like the thousandth time.

Finishing, I searched my mind for any magical solution that may have come as a result of reading the question yet again. Nothing.

Well, this is just peachy, I thought. There's a 25% chance that I'll get the question right. Even if I had multiple tries, my odds would be at best 50%, and that also means 1/2 chance for failure. In short, things did not look good.

Let's rewind a bit. Go back a week or so. I was studying in my room, or at least, trying to. Having three siblings can seem like a nuisance at times. In my case, it was unavoidable. I simply could not settle down to read. I'm going to fail if my studies continue like this, I thought to myself. As time wore on, I continued to think that. But every time I thought about the possibility of failure, my sentiments devolved to I'm going to fail. Soon, I found myself repeating it to myself. Every little brick of failure built itself into a slowly growing wall of emotion, which kept me more and more from studying and pushed me further and further away from my goal. The possibility of failure soon morphed into a probability. The negative attitude accumulated from those days trying to prepare carried on to the day I tested. Now, I would see the result of having such an outlook on my test.

I tried to think. Looking up at the clock, quietly ticking away the precious little time I had left, I saw I only had one minute left. I had expected my testing anxiety to make itself known in the form of a rapid heartbeat, but instead, I just sat there, looking at that single question. What was the use of even trying to answer? I would most likely get it wrong anyway. With a sigh of defeat, I watched as my time ended. The squadron's testing officer came to the table and took my test. Leaving

the room, I tried not to imagine the red pen striking out question after question. Bleh.

Emerging from the room, the testing officer informed me of the results on my milestone test. Sparing the reader (and my past self) from any anxiety, I can inform you that I missed the mark. I went home that night feeling like a failure. It was most definitely not my proudest moment.

Over the next couple of weeks, I hit the books. But in addition to my studies, I worked on my attitude. I knew that if I were to even try and get this thing done, I would need to approach it the right way. A few weeks later, I was stumped by another question. It was not the same one as had had me completely confused and annoyed when I had last taken the test, but it was hard nonetheless. This time, however, instead of thinking about how I was most likely going to fail, as I had previously, I persevered. Instead of lingering on the possibility that I might not get the promotion I desired, I thought back to how I had reacted to such a hard question in the past, and I did the opposite. Sparing the grueling details, I passed the test. During my promotion, my head was held high at the triumph of finally passing that test. The sense of accomplishment was great, and my attitude was even better.

Reflection

Was it solely my attitude that had made me pass that test? Probably not. Studying had been a huge part of it, but it was my attitude going into the test that had ultimately decided whether I would pass or fail. It doesn't matter if you know your stuff like the back of your hand, if you

have convinced yourself that you will fail, you will do just that. So lift your head high! Don't think because there is a possibility that you may fail, that you will. Think about the opposite. Know that you can keep trying, even when things seem bleak.

Chief V's Perspective

As Zig Ziglar said, "Failure is an event, not a person." What makes us think it's a person, namely us, is the attitude we develop from failing. Although some people believe that we learn more from our failures than we do from our successes, I disagree. Failing creates a negative attitude. No one wakes up in the morning thinking, "Hmmm... What can I fail at today?!" If you do, seek help! When we fail, we usually do believe we're failures. STOP IT! Nonetheless, it does create a negative attitude. It's a natural law.

Succeeding, on the other hand, creates a positive attitude. It even propels us to do more and better. That, too, is a natural law. How do you develop a success-full attitude? Here is a *PowerPact Leadership Lesson* that might help. It is titled *Failing to Learn*.

In Habit One, I shared my thoughts on the fear of failing. I left you with the idea that failing is one way to learn. Here's what I think...you don't learn from failing. You learn from NOT failing AGAIN! From not doing what you did to fail in the first place. The failure didn't teach you anything. The acknowledgement that whatever you did didn't work, did. The analysis and correction of how you failed taught you something. Unless you failed again. Which means, then, that you didn't learn what you were supposed to.

I remember a few decades ago (You know you're getting old when you refer to your past in decades.), while stationed at Fairchild Air Force Base in Washington state, going through an inspection in which we failed to achieve our goal several times. We kept failing! And every time we failed, we did what we'd just done, only harder and faster. We kept wondering why our procedures wouldn't work. Until our general asked something profound... "Have you changed the procedure?" No, we hadn't. But we did it harder and faster! I know, I already said that. (That's the other part of getting old.) We changed our procedure, tried again, and WALLAH, we succeeded!

So, you see, the failure itself doesn't teach us anything. Correcting what we did does. Dr Stephen Covey was gracious enough to teach me a few things. You remember the adage, "If at first you don't succeed, try again." WRONG! "If at first you don't succeed," Dr Covey taught me, "figure out why, change it, THEN try again. As long as you keep doing what you're doing, you'll keep getting what you're getting. We're perfectly aligned to produce what our processes are built to produce."

During my junior and senior years of high school, I spent my summers in Buena Park California, living with my uncle, Tío Rulie, and aunt, Mama Joyce, where I worked at the Lincoln and Knott Carwash. I was having a normal day when one of the guys that worked in the detailing shop drove an old Thunderbird up to me to put on the line. He told me not to turn the engine off since it would die if I did that. They'd just steam cleaned it. It was idling pretty fast. We usually turned the engines off and left them in neutral. The line was a chain-operated

contraption that pulled the cars down the line of brushes and sprayers and such. We'd have five or six cars on the line at a time.

I drove that old Thunderbird around to the line and drove it on to the next spot. I left it running as I was told. As I left the car, I slammed the door shut, which jolted the gear shift, dropping the transmission from neutral to drive. Since it went into drive and had been idling pretty fast, it jumped the tracks and kept going down the line rear-ending the car ahead, which, in turn, rear-ended the car ahead, which, did the same for six or so cars. Chaos ensued! BANG! BANG! BANG! Every car was jumping the line and running into the one in front of it! Employees, all of a sudden, appeared, I suppose to help, but more to see what the ruckus was about! After about ten minutes, all the cars had been parked out in the lot so that the managers could assess the damage. Most of the car owners were upset. Some were amused. Some had been looking to get a new car anyway so now they had an excuse to do so.

I walked over to the locker room, changed into my street clothes, and started to head home. As I left the locker room, the owner of the car wash, Mr Bob Burlund, came out screaming at me! "What are you doing?" he asked. He knew I was the person who had caused the problem. "I'm going home, Sir," I replied. "You don't have to tell me I'm fired." "FIRED?!" he continued. "I just invested twenty thousand dollars in teaching you a lesson. Now, get your butt back to work!" he admonished me. Two weeks later, I was made an assistant manager of the place. I learned not to do that again! EVER!

We don't learn from failing. We learn from correcting our failures. And that, by function, leads to success. As Henry Ford said, "Failure is simply the opportunity to begin again, this time, more intelligently."

Until next time, Be GREAT! You ARE!

¡HEIRPOWER!

Bob Vásquez!

Habit Ten: The CAPstone Legacy (Acknowledgements)

C/Dava Flowers, Founder

So lets ask the question... how did *cadets* write a book?

This collection of leadership lessons was one of the most challenging leadership exercises that I have accepted. The inspiration for this book was developed after I was given the opportunity to attend National Character and Leadership Symposium in February of 2019.

There, my team and I were introduced to CMSgt Bob Vasquez, otherwise known as "The Chief". His book, "Heirpower! Eight Basic Habits of Exceptionally Powerful Lieutenants" had been a big part of developing my leadership style. With a friend of mine, Nicholas Tupper, by my side, we approached the Chief and told him what we had learned from his book. There, in Arnold Hall, The Chief told us that he wanted to learn more about young leaders in the Civil Air Patrol.

I'm sure that he wasn't expecting us to come back with a book...but here we are.

That night, Tupper and I went to our host-home and annotated the first two chapters of Heirpower. We bought a black folder to hold our work, and spent the following day tracking down the Chief to present our idea to him.

That gesture sparked a chain of events that gained the support for the publishing of this book. That following summer, the Chief came to speak at Cadet Officer School, where I met many of the cadets who became authors, editors, and leaders through this book. The rest of the planning has been completely on our own initiative.

The list of cadets who supported this project are listed below. These cadets served in a variety of departments such as Editing, Outreach, Technical Support, Authorship, and Design.

Aadhesharjun Senthilkumar, Alec Stys, Annika Santhanam, Anurag Vattipalli, Anushka Kumar, Benjamin Menard, John 'Jack' Bush, Christopher Marshall, Dava Flowers, David Reid, Diego Ochoa, Erik Lechleitner, Ethan Partain, Hannah Van Cise, Harshitha Kota, Jadon Pinto, Johnpaul Stolle, Jordan Regalado, Kanyika Mswia, Kara McRorey, Lesage Abigail, Lillian Glover, Lillian Evasew, Noah Shepson, Pooja Loganathan, Ramffys Paniagua, Reef Ide, Sanmathi Priya, Abiram Lakshmi Devi, Sarah Valdivia, Sophie Thompson, Timothy House, Tomas Maldonado, Varija Mehta, Veronica Vergara, Zachariah Lofgren, Zachary Alvarado.

I would like to give a special thank-you to Nicholas Tupper for reassuring me that the idea was not absolutely insane, to Chief Bob Vasquez for providing our inspiration and publishing, and to Michael Kathriner and the Cadet Character and Leadership Foundation for sponsoring us throughout the publishing process.

Most importantly, thank you, Cadet Officer School and Civil Air Patrol, for creating a far-reaching community of leaders that will lead the future of our great nation.

"Mentors have Mentors!"

"Continue Problem Solving!"

"Be GREAT! You ARE!"

Chief V's Perspective

I'm honored and blessed to have been a part of this project. The idea, the challenge, of producing what you've just read came upon me as a surprise. July 5 2019, I'm sitting at Maxwell Air Force Base being interviewed by Lt Col Rob Smith about a talk I had just given to the CAP Cadets who were attending the Cadet Officer School and my book, when he asked my opinion of the value of the cadets writing a book. "That'd be GREAT!" I replied to the suggestion. "Okay," Lt Col Smith says, "let's do it!"

I was already ALL IN!

Then my protégé, Cadet Dava Flowers took over! What a Shining Star! She and Cadet Tupper and I had discussed collaborating on a book during a meeting at the Air Force Academy's National Character and Leadership Symposium in February 2019. Little did I know that it was more of a challenge to Dava than a suggestion. The fruit of her labor and the labor of several other CAP Cadets is in your hands. What a GREAT team of young leaders!

THANK YOU! We don't say those two words often enough. We don't express the feeling of gratitude that comes when we consider the value of something or someone as we should. THANK YOU, Dava, and everyone who played a role in making this project a success! You've left a legacy that others following your footprints will appreciate and, I hope, emulate as they grow into Leaders of Character! My last *PowerPact Leadership Lesson* is titled, *Leaving a Legacy!*

A legacy, by definition, is "a gift." I looked it up! When you lead, you're providing a gift to your followers. If you've done it right, you've given them a gift that they will, in turn, pass on to THEIR followers. That's the value of leaving a legacy. And we all do...leave a legacy. I'm convinced that most of us, if not all of us, would prefer to leave a legacy of being good leaders.

The other day I was walking the halls when I noticed a young captain leaning against a wall, looking at his cell phone, probably texting. As I came upon him, he acknowledged me by saying good morning and, as he did so, he noticed who I was and smiled as he almost proclaimed, "Chief Vásquez!" People do that! Often, with the expectation that I remember them. I've met a lot of people in my short

time on this earth. I can't remember them all. It ain't old age! It's the altitude! Anyways, I said hello and, not being able to help myself, I stopped to chat with him. Yeah, I know that not everyone has time to listen to my stories, but most people respect me enough to humor me. I appreciate that.

The captain reminded me that he'd been one of my students about seventeen years ago. Man, I REALLY don't remember that far back! We talked about the workshop he'd attended with me. I asked him if he remembered what I attempted to teach him. He did! Not everything, but some things, which is, I think, enough. What he recalled most was how I made him feel, which was good. Empowered is what he described. Empowered to strive to be a better person daily. That's my legacy.

As I said before, we all leave some kind of legacy. What will yours be? When you leave the team, group, organization, that you're a part of now, what gifts will you have left those who remain? What will they say about you? You know they will, right? What would you LIKE them to say?

A decade-and-a-half ago, a good friend and colleague rushes into my office, a concerned look on his face, and proclaims, "Chief!" "Sir," I reply as I stand for him. He sighs with relief and looks me over as he says, "I just got an email from a friend who told me that Bob Vásquez had died! So I came in as fast as I could to make sure it wasn't true!"

Now, THAT'S never happened! Plenty of stories about me have been told, but I've never known THAT story to circulate! I

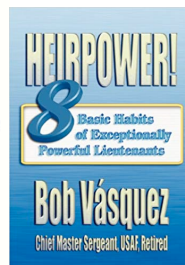
immediately looked myself over to ensure I truly WAS still there. I even touched my arm, just to make sure. Interestingly, a gentleman with my name HAD passed away. I know because I went over to the library and found the man's obituary in the local newspaper. He was my age, had two daughters, was originally from New Mexico...there was an uncanny resemblance, not physical, but life events. I bought a copy of the paper and cut out the obit to look at once in a while to remind me of the inevitable course of life. What's NOT inevitable is my, your, legacy. What gifts will you leave behind? What will they say about you? You can control that to some degree, you know, by your behavior. If you want people to remember you as kind, be kind! Loving? Love! You catch my drift.

In my life, the measure of success, especially as a dad, which is one of my most important roles, is that my daughters know that I love them. The test is when I tell them that I love them and they respond with, "I know." One of my favorite maxims is, "When you came into this world you cried and the people rejoiced. Live your life in such a way that when you leave this world the people will cry and you will rejoice." Strive to leave a legacy that people will appreciate. Start now!

Until next time, Be GREAT! You ARE!

¡HEIRPOWER!

Bob Vásquez!





“Every improvement we make, even the small ones, will propel us to work even harder.” -Bob Vásquez, Chief Master Sergeant, USAF, Retired

“If we dive into a task with a positive attitude, we are more likely to receive a positive result.” – Cadet Noah Shepson

“You will find incredible things when you truly listen to your people.”- Cadet Sophie Thompson

**Mentors have mentors!
Continue Problem Solving!
Be GREAT! You ARE!**

